



Goodwin's Weekly

"A Thinking Paper for Thinking People"

THE BACKSLIDING OF ELDER WILSON

THE backsliding of Elder Wilson was a source of pain and disappointment, not to say fanatical fury, to his brethren who had hoped that Demon Rum would permanently decamp from the bars and saloons on July 1. Elder Wilson has acted shockingly. He has pleaded the cause of Rum's aristocratic associate, Wine, and that poletarian knave, Beer, asking that they be not condemned to private homes until Jan. 1, 1920.

The effect of the president's plea, if congress accedes to it, will be to suspend war time prohibition on light wines and beer during the six months it would be in force under the present law. That law provides for prohibition on and after July 1 as a war time measure. On January 1 the constitutional amendment forbidding the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors will take effect. The president, therefore, is asking that prohibition be delayed for six months.

The obvious conclusion is that the president must have heard about a change in sentiment among the American people. He may have formed the opinion that when the soldiers went to war the slackers voted the country dry.

Our brand of prohibition is a strange and wonderful thing to the rest of the world. We heard, early in the European war, that Russia and France had gone dry, but it transpired that "dry" in the European sense meant only semi-arid. It never occurred to the French or the Russians to prohibit wine or beer. The French drew the line between absinthe and brandy on the one hand and wine—even strong wine—and beer on the other. To them wine and beer, although intoxicating, did not seem to contain any of the demonical qualities that American prohibitionists ascribed to all intoxicating liquors under the generic name of "rum."

The influenza epidemic, we believe, had much to do with changing sentiment in this country. It even "sobered up" the prohibitionists. Some of our erstwhile most obstreperous and pious prohibitionists fell sick of the influenza and, if their cellars were empty, sent out scouts for whisky. When members of their family contracted the disease they rushed off to plead with the bootleggers or others for a few quarts of their old enemy.

We are conscious that as we add sentence to sentence the general effect is alcoholic, as if we were pleading for a return of the saloons and the "wide open town." We hasten to meet the charge half way in full tilt and overthrow it. Although it is quite evident to the observing that the saloon has been moved into the homes we do not wish to plead the defunct cause of the public bar.

Our purpose is to emphasize, not so much the defects of prohibition, as the defects of prohibitionists. Our recollection goes back to those earlier days when Governor Spry opposed prohibition because the state was not ready for it. The people did not understand what kind of prohibition they wanted. They don't know today what kind of prohibition is needed.

When the influenza swept into Utah some of our leading prohibi-

tionists, the very men who had denounced Governor Spry from pulpit and rostrum, began to call for booze—not light wine and beer, but for whisky. We are not blaming them for that, but we do blame them and their fellow zealots, laymen and churchmen, for the intolerance of their utterances and for their downright misrepresentations of those who were acting according to the light that was in them and who, in the retrospect, appear to have had more light than heaven accorded to many of the bell-wethers of the prohibition flock.

Fanaticism and charity are as the poles apart. The fanatical prohibitionists denounced with a searing, annihilating fury the public men who stood in their way. Uncharitableness was the least of their sins. Murder of reputations was perhaps the worst. Among the most clamant of the crew who breathed forth destructive fires and poison gases of all uncharitableness were democrats, laymen and clergymen, who went about the state quoting their great and pure exemplar, T. Woodrow Wilson, as their saintly sanction for prohibition and for tearing their opponents to shreds. And now Elder Wilson has boldly removed his rusted halo somewhere in the land of the fizzing champagne and has called upon congress to let the wine and beer flow down the gullets of our hundred million for another six months. Perhaps the elder will take "a wee little nip" himself now and again.

We have remarked that after debating the prohibition question for many years the prohibitionists did not know what was needed when the time came to enact state and national laws. They felt quite sure that "bone-dry" prohibition was the only absolutely perfect system, but the influenza and the straying away of Elder Wilson have somewhat unsteaded their nerves, without, of course impairing their vocal powers. If any of our statesmen dared to doubt the perfection of their proposals they flew into a tigerish rage and were ready to rend and devour.

It is about time, we think, when even the righteous should pause and consider their neighbors in charity. A few years ago there were two sides to the question and even today the question is not all one-sided. It is about time, moreover, to let the furies of yesterday die out and to live together in true charity and according to the rule of reason.

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"HONEST ABE'S" SUCCESSOR.

"THE heart of the world is under very plain jackets," said President Wilson in a recent speech to the illuminati of France. "The heart of the world is at very simple firesides. The heart of the world is in very simple circumstances; and unless you know the pressure of life on the humbler classes, you know nothing of life whatever."

In his academic fashion, without ever having been in touch with the "heart of the world," Mr. Wilson has arrived at some very true conclusions. Feted by kings while he was spending millions of the